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SUBJECT: IOM DEEMS CHINA TAKING POSITIVE STEPS TO FIGHT
HUMAN TRAFFICKING

¶1. (SBU) In a January 28, 2010 telcon with Embassy Beijing and Department representatives, Tom Sinkovits, Head of Office for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Liaison Office in Beijing stated that human trafficking was a high interest issue in the upper ranks of the Chinese government. While characterizing China's approach to combat trafficking as "a work in progress," the IOM official nonetheless praised how far China had come in a short time. For instance, he noted for U.S. interlocutors that the PRC National Plan of Action to combat trafficking had been implemented in 2008 and that Chinese officials were working closely with IOM to address trafficking related issues.

¶2. (SBU) According to Sinkowits, China had demonstrated that there was high-level political will driving cooperation and progress on fighting human trafficking. He cited signs of progress at the provincial level, the recent "serious" crackdowns on trafficking by the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) and the All-China Women's Federation's interest in working to reintegrate trafficking victims into society as examples.

¶3. (SBU) Sinkovits told U.S. officials that, from the vantage point of IOM, the MPS and Ministry of Civil Affairs work with IOM to build coordination among various Chinese government agencies to provide support for trafficking victims was a positive indicator of the PRC's willingness to work with international partners to establish best practices. Sinkowits also stated that the Chinese officials were aware of the source of IOM funding for these projects, adding that they were "grateful" and "welcomed" the U.S. involvement.

¶4. (SBU) Sinkovits also cited the government's efforts to expand the MFA's consular department to provide support to Chinese victims of trafficking abroad as a clear sign that China is placing more emphasis on the care of Chinese victims. According to IOM, official Chinese government figures put the number of known trafficking victims at approximately 10,000 women and children. Of note, Chinese officials have now acknowledged that the vast majority of these victims were from internal trafficking. In the past, most Chinese government officials refused to acknowledge that trafficking was a domestic problem.

¶5. (SBU) Deficiencies still remain, according to Sinkowits. He noted that China lacks a legal definition of human trafficking and that there remains no clear legislation to protect victims of trafficking. Also of note is that China lacks a criminal law related to trafficking in men.

¶6. (SBU) With a worldwide reputation as the leading international agency on migration-related issues, the diplomatic community in Beijing has found IOM to be a reliable point of reference when assessing the government's efforts to addressing trafficking.

HUNTSMAN